

Message Text

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AMCONGEN NAPLES

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SHAPEUSNR

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TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: LEFT GIUNTA FORMED IN ROME

SUMMARY. ROME HAS A NEW MAYOR: GIULIO CARLO ARGAN, A 67-YEAR OLD PROFESSOR OF ART WHO RAN AS AN "INDEPENDENT" ON THE PCI TICKET. AS THE PARTY OF THE RELATIVE MAJORITY IN THE CAPITAL, THE PCI PUT FORTH ARGAN'S CANDIDACY AND FORMED THE LEFT COALITION MINORITY GIUNTA (PCI-PSI-PSDI) WHICH BENEFITS FROM PRI ABSTENTION. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITALY'S POSTWAR

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HISTORY, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAVE PASSED OVER TO THE OPPOSITION

IN ROME. WITH DC AND PCI STRENGTH IN ROME ALMOST EQUALLY DIVIDED, THE LEFT COALITION SOLUTION AGAIN DEMONSTRATES THE DISPROPORTIONATELY DETERMINING ROLE PLAYED BY THE MINISCULE LAY PARTIES-- IN THIS CASE, THW SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS. END SUMMARY.

1. AS THE RESULT OF LABORIOUS INTER-PARTY NEGOTIATIONS AND IN THE WAKE OF THE FORMATION OF A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, THE ROME CITY COUNCIL ON AUGUST 9 ELECTED GIULIO CARLO ARGAN, AN "INDEPENDENT" (WHO HAD RUN ON THE PCI LIST) AS THE CAPITAL'S FIRST "LAY" MAYOR SINCE 1914. BORN IN TURIN IN 1909, ARGAN IS THE AUTHOR OF NUMEROUS WORKS OF ART HISTORY AND CRITICISM. HE HAS BEEN A RESPECTED PROFESSOR OF ART HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ROME SINCE 1959. WHILE THE PRESS HAD SPECULATED THAT THE COMMUNISTS MIGHT RUN ONE OF THEIR OWN FOR THIS PRESTIGIOUS POSITION, THE PCI HELD TRUE TO ITS POLICY OF GRADUALISM BY PUTTING FORTH THE NAME OF A NOMINAL INDEPENDENT.

2. IN THE VOTE, ARGAN RECEIVED THE 39 AFFIRMATIVE VOTES OF THE PCI-PSI-PSDI COALITION THAT NOW RULES ROME WITH PRI EXTERNAL SUPPORT. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITALY'S POST-WAR HISTORY, THE DC PLACED ITSELF IN ROME IN THE OPPOSITION. IN ORDER TO EMPHASIZE THEIR ROLE OF CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION, THE DC CAST BLANK BALLOTS ON THE SELECTION OF THE NEW MAYOR. THE PLI AND MSI/DN VOTED AGAINST. WHILE THE REPUBLICANS WERE EXPECTED TO ABSTAIN, THEY SURPRISINGLY CAST BLANK VOTES (3) ON THE MAYORAL VOTE. THEY HAVE NONETHELESS INDICATED THAT THEY WILL SUPPORT THE LEFT GIUNTA BY ABSTAINING ON MOST VOTES IN THE FUTURE (AND VOTING IN FAVOR ON CRUCIAL VOTES SUCH AS THE BUDGET VOTE WHERE A FULL AMJORITY IS REQUIRED). COMMENT: IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE PRI CAST BLANK BALLOTS SINCE THE PRI'S ABSTENTION ON THE MAYORAL VOTE WAS NOT DETERMINATIVE IN VIEW OF ABSENCES (SUCH AS ANDREOTTI) AND OTHER ABSTENTIONS (DEM PRO AND RAD) WHICH LOWERED THE MAJORITY NEEDED FOR THE LEFT GIUNTA TO PASS. END COMMENT.

3. ACCORDING TO THE PRE-ARRANGED PLAN, THE POSITION OF "ELDER ASSESSOR" OR DEPUTY MAYOR WAS TO HAVE BEEN ACCORDED TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR KEY ROLE IN FORMING THE LEFT COALITION GIUNTA. HOWEVER, SOME CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS CAST SPURIOUS VOTES FOR OTHER CANDIDATES TO EXPRESS THEIR PIQUE AT PSDI PARTICIPATION IN THE GIUNTA, RESULTING IN THE ELECTION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF A SOCIALIST (BENZONI) AS DEPUTY MAYOR.

4. IN HIS ACCEPTANCE SPEECH, ARGAN FIRST EXPRESSED GRATITUDE TO THE PCI FOR NOMINATING HIM AND THEN APPEALED FOR BRAOD SUPPORT IN TACKLING ROME'S STAGGERING URBAN AND BUDGETARY BROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE JUNE 20 VOTE WAS A "HISTORIC BREAK WITH THE PAST, ONE SHOULD NOT DIG A TRENCH BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES."

5. CONCURRENTLY WITH NEGOTIATIONS FOR FORMATION OF ROME CITY GOVERNMENT, AN INTER-PARTY ACCORD HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN WORKED OUT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LEFTIST GIUNTA FOR ROME PROVINCE. THE PRESIDENCY OF THE GIUNTA IS EXPECTED TO GO TO A SOCIAL-DEMOCRAT.

6. WITH THE FORMATION OF A LEFT GIUNTA IN ROME, FULLY 39 OF THE 94 COMMUNAL GOVERNMENTS IN PROVINCIAL CAPITALS ARE ADMINISTERED BY LEFT GIUNTAS. THESE INCLUDE MOST OF ITALY'S LARGEST CITIES (SUCH AS MILAN, VENICE, TURIN, GENOA, NAPLES, AND FLORENCE, BUT NOT PALERMO, CAGLIARI AND, SO FAR, BARI). THE NUMBER OF LEFTIST PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS IS EVEN HIGHER (47 OF THE 94). SO FAR, HOWEVER, ONLY 6 OF THE 20 REGIONS (EMILIA, PIEDMONT, LIGURIA, TUSCANY AND LAZIO) ARE RULED BY LEFT GIUNTAS.

7. COMMENT: THE PCI SELECTION OF A RESPECTED ACADEMIC WHO IS AT LEAST NOMINALLY AN INDEPENDENT WAS SHREWD IN MAKING THE DC'S LOSS OF THE ROME MAYORSHIP AT LEAST OPTICALLY MORE ACCEPTABLE. SO FAR, THE VATICAN ORGAN (OSSERVATORE ROMANO) HAS REPORTED THE PROCESS OF ARGAN'S ELECTION WITH CONSIDERABLE CIRCUMSPECTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, AS IL GIORNALE POINTS OUT, ROME IN EFFECT HAS A COMMUNIST MAYOR--THE DIFFERENCE IS LARGELY SEMANTIC. THE FORMATION OF A LEFT GIUNTA IN ROME AGAIN DEMONSTRATES THE DISPROPORTIONATELY DETERMINING INFLUENCE ENJOYED BY THE SMALL LEFT PARTIES IN THE CURRENT POLARIZED POLITICAL SCENE WITH DC AND PCI STRENGTH IN ROME ALMOST EQUALLY DIVIDED (27 VS 30 SEATS). VOLPE

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